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ABSTRACT

This practicum addressed the problems of low self-esteem levels of at-risk students in kindergarten and in grades three and five by implementing a peer facilitator program. The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, the OUNCE Attitude Scale, and a Kindergarten Checklist of Low Self-Esteem Characteristics were used to determine the students' self-esteem levels. Targeted students then participated in a 12-week self-esteem enhancement program. Fifth grade students were trained as peer facilitators to teach eight 20-minute self-esteem lessons, incoporating the sense of magic, to kindergarten and third grade students. Results measured by the OUNCE attitude Scale indicated increased levels of self-esteem and self-confidence. While the results desired for the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory and the Kindergarten Checklist of Low Self-Esteem Characteristics were not achieved, sizable gains were noted. The project was well-received by all of the involved students and it was concluded that the use of peer facilitators can result in improved self-esteem levels. (Author/SH)

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THE USE OF PEER FACILITATORS TO ENHANCE SELF-ESTEEM LEVELS OF AT-RISK STUDENTS

by

Joann B. Winkler

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A Practicum Report

Submitted to the Faculty of the Center for the Advancement of Education, Nova University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science.

July, 1991

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Abstract

The Use of Peer Facilitators to Enhance Self-Esteem Levels of At-Risk Students.

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Descriptors: Elementary Education/ Self-Esteem/ At-Risk Students/ Peer Facilitators/ Drop-Out Prevention/ Affective Education/ Alternative Education/ Self Concept/ Peer Tutoring/ Magic Tricks/ Counseling/

The low self-esteem levels of at-risk students in grades kindergarten, three and five were addressed through the implementation of a peer facilitator program. The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (Coopersmith, 1967), the OUNCE Attitude Scale, and a Kindergarten Checklist of Low Self-Esteem Characteristics were used to determine the students' self-esteem levels. Fifth grade students were trained by the author as peer facilitators to teach self-esteem lessons, incorporating the use of magic, to kindergarten and third grade students. Results measured by the OUNCE Attitude Scale indicated increased levels of self-esteem and self-confidence. While the results desired for the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory and the Kindergarten Checklist of Low Self-Esteem Characteristics were not achieved, sizeable gains were noted. It was concluded that the use of peer facilitators can result in improved self-esteem levels. Appendices include pre and post implementation scores and a copy of the Kindergarten Checklist of Low Self-Esteem Characteristics.

Authorship Statement

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. When it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give this testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other professionals in the field and in the hope that my own work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

Joann B. Winkler

Joann B. Winkler

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CHAPTER I

Purpose

Background

The site of this practicum was an elementary school located in a southwest Florida county with a population of 99,214. This county was comprised of a large retirement population, however, the past ten years had witnessed a rapid growth in the number of families with school age children. These residents were from all 50 states as well as many foreign countries. Ninety-six percent of the population was White. The average household income in this county was $26,256 per year. However, a significant portion of the population, 18.9 percent, had household incomes of less than $10,000 per year. The vast majority of workers in the county were employed in service-type jobs with the largest employer being the school system.

The targeted elementary school was the largest of nine within the school system, with a total enrollment of 823 students in grades Pre-K to five. Instruction was provided by a staff of 31 classroom, teachers, five special area teachers, three exceptional

student education teachers, three dropout prevention teachers and one Chapter I teacher. These teachers were assisted by 13 instructional aides and an office support staff consisting of a principal, assistant principal, guidance counselor, PREP specialist, school nurse and social worker.

Of the 823 students enrolled, 244 were eligible to receive free and reduced lunches thus allowing the school to receive Chapter I funding. Attendance of the students was high with average daily attendance being 96.2 percent. Parental involvement was high within this school site. Parents were actively involved within the school as volunteers, committee members and as mentors. Many parents regularly attended PTO meetings, SAC meetings and school sponsored events.

For the past 14 years, the writer had worked within this school system as a Chapter I teacher, exceptional student education teacher and a teacher of fourth, fifth and sixth grade students. The writer was the teacher of a self-contained fifth grade dropout prevention class at the practicum site.

Problem Statement

Each school year larger numbers of students considered to be at risk of being academically unsuccessful enter school. Many times a lack of care and nurturing during pre-school years has resulted in children with low self-esteem. These children experience difficulty in dealing with adults and peers and are predisposed to academic failure. When children feel good about themselves, they are more likely to succeed. When children see themselves in a bad light, negative behavior results (Mitchell, 1985).

If children begin school with a poor self-concept only to have that image reinforced by academic and social failure, they are destined to have difficulties in the future. These difficulties may take the form of substance abuse, delinquency, unemployment, mental illness or dropping out of school. Many behavior problems within our classrooms can be traced to children having low self-esteem.

Although teachers frequently speak of students as possessing low self-esteem and attribute to this many classroom problems, self-esteem enhancement is not routinely provided in the schools. Providing students with the necessary tools for building self-esteem must occur and can be successful (Burnett, 1983).

A self confident student will learn things more readily. When strong self concepts are in place, many of the schools' problems, as well as society's, will cease (Burton, 1989).

A pressing need for self-esteem enhancement exists within our schools. Discrepancies were documented within the target school verifying that the self-esteem levels of identified at-risk students were measurably below average. Within this school, the writer selected three classrooms, a kindergarten class, a third grade classroom and a fifth grade dropout prevention class for practicum implementation.

Nine students considered to be lacking self-esteem were selected from the kindergarten class. Of these nine, three qualified for free and reduced lunches, six came from split homes, three had been retained in kindergarten and one was a non-English speaking student. These students were targeted by their classroom teacher as needing self-esteem enhancement for one or more of the following reasons: problematic scores on the Ounce Attitude Scale, demonstrated lack of academic self-confidence, demonstrated inappropriate interactions with teachers and peers and demonstrate difficulty with academic tasks. The self-contained kindergarten classroom of 28 students was instructed by one teacher who was assigned one hour of instructional aide time per day. Many parent and student volunteers interacted with these children.

The selected third grade classroom had an enrollment of 29 students. Nine of these students were identified by their teacher as having low self-esteem. Of these nine students, three qualified for free and reduced lunches, four came from split homes, one had been retained and one had limited English proficiency. Academic difficulties were being experienced by a majority of these students as evidenced by the fact that five attended the Chapter I Reading Lab. In addition, seven of these students were performing poorly in reading or math. All nine of these students were being considered for placement in a dropout prevention classroom for the 1991-1992 school year.

The fifth grade dropout prevention classroom had an enrollment of 18 students, all of whom were involved in the practicum implementation. Of these 18, nine qualified for free and reduced lunches, 11 came from broken homes, and eight had been retained. Difficulty with academic work was experienced by a majority of these students. Fourteen students attended the Chapter I Reading Lab while 15 students experienced difficulty in reading or math. Additionally, 100 percent of the enrolled students were described as having poor self concepts by the teachers referring them for placement in the dropout prevention class. Within this classroom, parent involvement was high,

however, this involvement did not extend beyond the classroom as evidenced by the low number of PTO memberships and volunteer hours, and by poor attendance at school functions.

Students were selected for participation in the practicum implementation based on the aforementioned factors as well as problematic scores on the Ounce Attitude Scale. The short form of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory was administered to the third and fifth grade students to obtain a second self-esteem rating. This test was not given to the kindergarten students as the Coopersmith does not test students below third grade level. In lieu of this, teacher observation was used as verification of certain behaviors associated with low self-esteem.

Due to the short attention spans of many of the examinees, the writer elected to use a shortened version of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory. Of the 27 third and fifth grade students assessed with this instrument, 85 percent scored below the mean. The scores ranged from a high of 72 to a low of 20 (Appendix A: 40). Two sections, Self-Esteem and Self-Confidence, of the Ounce Attitude Scale were also used to evaluate the targeted kindergarten, third and fifth grade students. Seventy-five percent of the students were rated as below average in the area of self-esteem. Ninety-two percent of the examinees were rated below

average in the self-confidence section (Appendix B: 42). These students should have rated average or above in the self-confidence and self-esteem sections of the scale.

To further validate the obtained scores, a comparison was made. The writer found that 86 percent of the third and fifth grade students who scored below the mean on the Coopersmith also rated below average in at least one section of the Ounce scale. To proceed successfully through school, students should have demonstrated self-esteem levels within the average range on both instruments.

To further evaluate the kindergarten students, a teacher made list of observable characteristics used routinely to evaluate the students was completed (Appendix C: 46). One hundred percent of the students demonstrated at least three of the observable characteristics that equated with low self-esteem (Appendix D: 49). In order to be successful in kindergarten, the students should have demonstrated less than three observable characteristics. The results of these observations, as well as the Coopersmith and OUNCE results, reinforced the need for self-esteem enhancement strategies.

An anticipated, all 36 of the selected students demonstrated a lack of self-esteem as measured by one or more of the assessment

tools, thus establishing the need for a self-esteem enhancement program. There was no specific time within the school day allotted for this purpose. The approaches being used were hit or miss. Clearly, the creation of a structured program of this type was strongly indicated.

Outcome Objectives

The targeted kindergarten, third and fifth grade students participated in a 12 week self-esteem enhancement program. The following objectives were to be assessed at the end of that time:

(1) At the end of 12 weeks, 50 percent of the third and fifth grade students would demonstrate an increase of five to 10 points on the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory.

(2) At the end of 12 weeks, 50 percent of kindergarten, third and fifth grade students would demonstrate an increase of one to five points on the OUNCE sub test for self-esteem.

(3) At the end of 12 weeks, 50 percent of kindergarten, third and fifth grade students would demonstrate an increase of one to five points on the OUNCE sub-test for self-confidence.

(4) At the end of 12 weeks, 100 percent of the targeted kindergarten students would have reduced the number of observable characteristics of low self-esteem to less than three as measured

by the teacher made checklist of observable characteristics of low self-esteem.

(5) At the end of 12 weeks, the targeted fifth grade students would demonstrate an increase in critical thinking skills relating to the quantity and quality of items listed as necessary for self-esteem. The increase would be measured by the difference between a pre-implementation list and a post-implementation list. Because the pre-implementation list was so limited, the addition of one quality item was seen as measurable improvement.

(6) At the end of 12 weeks, all of the teachers involved in this project would use peer facilitators to provide a self-esteem enhancement program within their classrooms as measured by observations and a log which would be kept by the writer.

CHAPTER II

Research and Solution Strategy

Two divergent viewpoints emerge in the research concerning student self-esteem. Many researchers are proponents of the theory that increased self-esteem results from academic achievement. Others advocate the position that academic success is the result of high self-esteem. Studies repeatedly have shown that students who underachieve in school in comparison with others in their class have lower self-concepts and lower feelings of self-worth (Mandel and Marcus, 1988). However, there are disagreements among researchers as to whether self-esteem levels are the cause or the effect of students achievement levels.

Covington (1984) believes that rather than self-esteem alone causing achievement, a desire to maintain or increase one's current level of self-esteem is what motivates students. Adherents of this philosophy might expect students with poor self-esteem to be driven to succeed. This is not often the case. Students want desperately to succeed, but at the same time they fear failure. The result of this dichotomy is the student who will not even try (Covington, 1984).

Increases in self-esteem usually are preceded by successes (Holly, 1987). Students' self-esteem will increase as we teach and they master necessary skills. If activities assigned to them are seen as purposeful and of value, students will learn them because they desire to do so. They will not learn something simply to enhance their self-esteem, but rather to maintain it. Students should be taught to evaluate and question those things we ask them to learn, and if perceived to be of value they will need no additional source of motivation (Holly, 1987).

Students who do well in school tend to develop stronger self-concepts as they progress through school. A loss of self-esteem occurs in those students who do poorly (Silvernail, 1985). Unless educational alternatives are implemented, this cycle will continue (Klempner, 1981). Clearly, a relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement exists. As a student progresses through school experiencing limited success, a feeling of inadequacy or dislike of one's self occurs. As a result, students may choose behaviors which limit even more their chances of success. These children are at-risk (Hoffman, 1987).

The emphasis in most schools today is on academics. Research shows that self-esteem enhancement should receive its just position. Mitchell (1985) cites Sumter County, Maryland as an

example of what an effective self-esteem enhancement program can do. Discipline problems and absenteeism decreased, while student achievement test scores increased by one year of progress in some districts. Student failure of grades or subjects was the lowest ever recorded for this county.

Another successful program described by Canfield (1990) is a high school implementation of a self-esteem study. The students were divided into three groups: a control group, an experimental group, and a third group not involved in the study. The method of treatment for the 93 students in the experimental group consisted of instruction provided by instructors who applied the following three principles: treat all students with unconditional regard, encourage and monitor goal setting, and encourage students to be the best they can be. The group also participated in self-esteem activities bimonthly for their entire freshman year. The control group received no treatment. Both groups were monitored for four years. The results were impressive. The experimental group had fewer absences, completed more homework, participated in more extracurricular activities, held more class offices and had a higher percentage of students who graduated.

An effective strategy utilized at a middle school in Eugene, Oregon was based on the principle that self-esteem grows from

extracurricular activities, held more class offices and had a higher percentage of students who graduated.

An effective strategy utilized at a middle school in Eugene, Oregon was based on the principle that self-esteem grows from success (Holly, 1987). Students at the school knew they were valued and cared for by their teacher. They remained within the same homeroom with the same teacher acting as an advisor and mentor for three years. In addition, students at the school were acknowledged and rewarded for their achievements at lease once a year. Students were graded on their own personal advancements and were expected to provide service to their community. The staff at the school recognized that success could be achieved in many areas, not just academics.

Student specialists was a strategy employed by a junior high school in Milwaukee, Oregon (Holly, 1987). These specially selected students were trained to assist students needing help. Serving as role models, they facilitated the return to the group of students experiencing difficulties. Students were encouraged to evaluate themselves and pursue their strengths, be they academic or otherwise, to the utmost.

Holly (1987) reported on the Positive Action Program developed by Allred and utilized daily in 20 minute periods at an

elementary school in Corvallis, Oregon to develop student self-esteem. The goal of this program was for students to develop a sense of self and build on their strengths so as to be able to experience a full and happy life. Teachers and parents viewed the program as having positive effects on students.

Key elements which appear in many of the self-esteem strategies being used are goal setting, taking responsibility for one's actions and recognizing one's value (Burton, 1989). A program of eight lessons used by Burnett (1983) applied these principles to small groups of three to 12 students who met for approximately 45 minutes per session. A homework assignment was given following each group meeting to help extend the concept covered. This program resulted in a significant measured gain in self-esteem for the participants with a minimal amount of teacher time being invested. Although this program was used with seventh graders, there is reason to believe self-esteem enhancement programs would benefit students at any grade level.

Other approaches to self-esteem enhancement have utilized guidance personnel rather than teachers. A guidance approach, Success in School, used by Ruben (1989) proved effective at an elementary school in Miami Beach. This program involved a guidance counselor who met with a fifth grade class for 50

minutes, two days per week, for five weeks. Topics covered within the five weeks included success in school, being comfortable in school, being responsible in school, listening in school, asking for help in school, how to improve school, cooperating with peers at school, cooperating with teachers at school and the bright side of me. The students who participated in this program verbalized positive thoughts about themselves and their futures. The unique presentation of desired school behaviors in a positive, nurturing environment was pleasurable for the students.

> School programs that help students improve their self-esteem should pave the way to reduce dropout rates. We have learned through many studies that the process that leads to school dropout is cumulative. Early negative experiences, with academic performance and discipline, lead to negative messages and more concrete problems. These experiences tend to reinforce a child's poor self-concept, negative attidtudes, or perceptions that school is not for them. These students tend to believe that few people are interested in them. The Success in School program refutes that premise. (Ruben, 1989).

Admittedly, more attention must be given to the learning experiences, both academic and affective, of students. When a lack of professional staff time for such purposes exists, a peer helper program can be successfully implemented. In a program of this kind, selected students are trained to listen reflectively

and provide appropriate encouragement to other students. Peer facilitators assist others to think about and understand themselves. These trained students use skills that allow for clear communication and personal introspection. By listening and encouraging, they enable others to move towards a goal. The students are trained to listen, give feedback, respond selectively, and to make decisions (Myrick, 1985). The students are monitored by a professional counselor or teacher with their goal being to assist personal as well as academic development (Bowman, 1983).

Both the student facilitators and those being assisted benefit in programs of this kind. Low achievers benefit from this training as it gives them a chance to feel needed and important. They will take more responsibility for learning.

Peer helpers also work with students who are withdrawn or aggressive to explore alternatives to their present behavior. Students who have fallen behind do not feel as embarrassed or defensive with a peer. Training students to act as group leaders allows for more classroom participation in group discussions (Bowman, 1983).

A study conducted in Alachua County, Florida schools (Bowman, Myrick, 1987) has shown the peer facilitator methods to increase

self-esteem of students. Fifth grade students were selected by their classroom teachers and trained by the school counselors to work with second and third grade students experiencing behavior problems in the classroom. While the largest measurable gains in self-esteem were attained by the second and third graders, students and teachers noted improvements of both groups in listening and displaying empathy.

The solution strategy chosen for this project was based on a project that trained peer facilitators to lead guidance lessons. Students were provided with detailed instruction and then rehearsed the lesson. When ready they presented the lesson to a small group. Groups of students often cooperatively presented such lessons (Campbell, 1983).

The discrepancy at the practicum site between measured self-esteem levels of at-risk students and acceptable self-esteem levels for these students was addressed using this peer facilitator approach (Campbell, 1983) to lead lessons designed to enhance self-esteem (Bowman, 1983, Burnett, 1983, Ruben, 1989). The peer facilitator development methods discussed by Myrick (1985) were used for student training. Research had demonstrated that self-esteem enhancement could be successful (Mitchell, 1985, Canfield, 1990, Holly, 1987). Peer facilitator programs had also

been proven effective (Bowman, 1983, Bowman and Myrick, 1987). It was felt by the writer that the combining of two effective programs would yield positive results.

When working with the at-risk student successes are sometimes minimal, and yet it is success that builds self-esteem (Holly, 1987). The strategy utilized allowed for and encouraged the success of the at-risk child. The strategy permitted the fifth grade students to become competent at leading a self-esteem lesson As they directed the lesson to kindergarten and third grade students, they would recognize and attribute to themselves their success. Magic tricks were learned and used to introduce, enhance or review the lesson. The fifth grade students' ability to utilize magic tricks effectively would esteem them in the eyes of the younger students (Bowman, 1986).

By first being taught a self-esteem lesson, practicing that lesson and then teaching it to kindergarten or third grade students, an opportunity for internalizing the lesson would occur. An increased self-esteem level was anticipated in the targeted fifth graders. By participating in a self-esteem enhancement program at an early age, gains in self-esteem were expected by the kindergarteners and third grade students. The use of a peer to teach lessons about achieving school success would serve to

validate the importance of such a lesson. Some degree of modeling was expected as the younger students established a rapport with their older tutors.

Throughout the practicum implementation an Open-Ended Discussion Strategy (Costa, 1985) was used to allow the fifth grade students to offer opinions regarding follow-up activities and future lessons. The strategy included the following steps:

1. Design a task.
2. Internalize the task (see it, think about it).
3. Share your response with another person.
4. Communicate in small groups.
5. Use principles of active, nonjudgmental participation.
6. Stimulate discussion.
7. Students summarize the discussion (Costa, 1985).

Such a strategy allowed the students to think of new ideas and express them without fear, for open disucssion. The process fostered the development of logical thinking skills and good listening behaviors. Appreciation of other viewpoints was witnessed.

CHAPTER III

Method

The implementation of the strategy to use peer facilitators for self-esteem enhancement was accomplished within a 12 week period. The following time schedule was followed:

Weeks one and two: An initial meeting was held with the mentor, kindergarten and third grade teachers to explain the practicum objectives and their roles during implementation. It was decided at this time that the eight self-esteem lessons would be taught to both classrooms on Friday mornings for approximately 20 minutes over a 12 week period. During week 12, post testing would occur. Both teachers asked to have more than the target group of students involved and initially this did not seem to present a problem.

The participating teachers were asked to provide oral as well as written feedback of any positive or negative changes noted in students' attitudes or behavior during implementation. The importance of the target students attending each lesson was stressed and verbally encouraged by the mentor. Methods for infusing critical thinking were discussed. Due to the limited

time available, it was decided that the fifth grade students would extend their use of th Open-Ended Discussion Strategy (Costa, 1985) to the self-esteem lessons. Brainstorming was also going to be utilized. The teachers agreed to incorporate these techniques when possible into their lessons. The use of follow-up activities was also discussed. It was decided that only the kindergarten and fifth grade students would participate, as the third grade teacher felt her schedule did not allow enough extra time for this.

The practicum project was introduced to the fifth grade students by the writer using a discovery technique. At this time the students, working in cooperative groups, researched the term self-esteem and became familiar with using it. It was decided by the class that self-esteem was one's feelings about one's value and worth. These feelings could be positive or negative, were affected by situations and people, and could be raised or lowered. The students discussed specific events that had occurred both at home and at school and the effect these events had had on their self-esteem levels.

Once the students were comfortable with the concept of self-esteem, the practicum goals were explained and discussed. Because motivation was high, limiting time spent on the project was difficult throughout. The magic equipment was made available

within the classroom, so that students could become familiar with its use and conceive future lessons.

During weeks one and two the term peer facilitator was introduced and explained. The students were trained by the author in the following areas: listening attentively, understanding the other person's point of view, accepting the person, caring enough to be committed and involved, and being genuine. While interpersonal skills had been stressed throughout the year in the author's classroom, during weeks one and two of implementation, 30 minutes of role playing and discussion took place in which students practiced listening, responding reflectively, giving feedback in an unbiased manner, and decision making. A useful source consulted by the author during training was Youth Helping Youth: A Handbook for Training Peer Facilitators by Myrick and Erney (1985).

Evidence of the peer facilitator training was seen within the author's classroom almost immediately. A calmer environment was noted, as well as a more cooperative group of students who made positive comments one to another. Students also commented on the new classroom tone. Use of the term self-esteem was frequent and verbal recognition of things that would increase one's self-esteem took place.

At the end of week two, a brainstorming session was held and concensus reached on the eight topics to be addressed by the self-esteem lessons. The following topics were selected: I Am Special, Making Friends, Cooperation, Manners, Uniqueness, Setting and Reaching Goals, Feelings and a review lesson incorporating all of the previous topics. Each fifth grade student participated in two lessons, once as a magician and once as a teacher.

Weeks three through 11: The fifth grade students, under the writer's direction, taught self-esteem lessons to their assigned students. The following procedure was followed each week:

Day one: The writer introduced the self-esteem topic for the week and taught a 20 minute lesson dealing with it. A magic trick was utilized to introduce, enhance or review the lesson. The materials necessary for performing these tricks were available within the writer's classroom. No additional expenditures were incurred.

Days two through four: The fifth grade students practiced, with partners and before small groups, the lesson taught by the writer. They were encouraged to practice, especially the magic trick, at home. The students also developed other activities for the kindergarten students to be follow-ups for the lesson.

Day five: The self-esteem lesson was be taught by the fifth grade students to their assigned group. The fifth graders' roles within the group changed each week with the roles being teacher and magician. The follow-up activities were not conducted on specific days, but rather at those times mutually suitable to the writer and the kindergarten teacher.

Initially, the self-esteem lessons were developed by the author. However, as implementation proceeded, the fifth graders began sharing ideas for future lessons and lesson planning became a cooperative effort. A summary of each lesson and the magic trick performed follows.

Lesson One: Topic - I Am Special

Trick - A mirror was hidden inside a beautifully wrapped package. Three clues were given. The clues were; what is inside has feelings, what is inside is special to all of us, and what is inside will look different to each of us. The student opened the package, saw himself and passed the box to the next person.

Lesson Two: Topic - Making Friends

Trick - The Multiplying Sponge Ball trick was used to help the students visualize the concept that if you have one friend, represented by one sponge ball, whom you treat well, soon others

will notice and more friends will come your way. When the student opened his hand, four sponge balls had replaced the one.

Lesson Three: Topic - Cooperation

Trick - The Joining Rings were used to enhance the lesson. Students discussed cooperation and the characteristics that are seen in a cooperative group. Each time a student named a characteristic, rings that previously could not be joined were joined. This lesson was developed entirely by the fifth grade class.

Lesson Four: Topic - Setting and Reaching Goals

Trick - The Needle Through the Balloon Trick started this lesson. After the 16 inch needle passed through a latex balloon without it popping, the three Wizard of Oz traits, (heart, brain and courage), were taught. The need for these three traits in accomplishing goals was made (Bowman, 1986).

Lesson Five: Topic - Feelings

Trick - A magic coloring book in which blank pages first develop lines and then are colored was used for this lesson. The point made by the magician was that no matter what situations we encounter each day, we have the power to decide how these will effect us and color our day. This lesson was developed by the fifth graders.

Lesson Six: Topic - Uniqueness

Trick - Three unequal lengths of rope magically became equal lengths. The lesson taught stressed each persons's unique qualities and their importance in our classrooms and our world. This lesson was student devised.

Lesson Seven: Topic - Magic Words

Trick - A break-away fan was used in this lesson that would operate correctly only when the magic words, please, thank you, I'm sorry, you're welcome and excuse me, were used. This lesson also was student devised.

Lesson Eight: Topic: Review lesson

Trick - The Magic Purse was used in this lesson. The students conducted a review of each trick and the lesson learned. As the audience verbalized these lessons, they were allowed to drop the idea into an empty purse. When all the ideas were inside the purse, the magician magically pulled a list of friends, the students' names, from the purse. The author was impressed with how well the kindergarten and third graders remembered each trick and the lesson it had taught.

Week 12: Post testing using the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, the OUNCE Attitude Scale, and the kindergarten checklist was done by the kindergarten, third and fifth grade teachers.

The practicum project was well received by all of the involved students. They verbalized these feelings ofter nad were adamant that time be found each week, even during achievement testing, to do the lessons. The fifth grade students expressed a desire to expand the program to include additional classes. While time did not permit this, they were able to demonstrate their knowledge and skill once again for their parents.

Only one major problem was encountered during the project, and the author was unable to satisfactorily resolve it. Throughout implementation, the third grade teacher neglected to send all of her targeted students, but would instead send those who had completed their daily assignments. The author spoke with the teacher about the need for the target group to be present at all eight sessions. When no improvement occurred, the mentor also spoke with the teacher. Once again, no change. Finally, it was agreed that the lessons would be taught to the entire third grade group. A true rapport never was developed between this class and the fifth grade class. The author believes the inconsistent attendance of the students may account in part for the failure to meet the established objectives.

In comparison, the kindergarten teacher, not only allowed her students to attend the lessons, but also did follow-up lessons

within her classroom. The fifth graders developed friendships with the kindergarteners. They wrote them letters, gave them gifts, planned a breakfast for them, designed a bulletin board featuring them and found time to share with their new friends. The author believes this bond of friendship, which allowed for the esteeming of both the kindergarten and the fifth grade students, may have accounted in part for the higher percentage of kindergarten and fifth grade students meeting the established objectives.

Both the kindergarten and third grade teachers were trained by the author to use peer facilitators within their classrooms. The idea was well received and utilized. Despite the attendance problem discussed earlier, the third grade teacher did have a strong interest in both peer facilitation and magic tricks. It was her suggestion to expand the program to include all students and offer training after school hours. She expressed a desire to assist with the training.

CHAPTER IV

Results

The results of the practicum using peer facilitators to enhance self-esteem was evaluated during week 12 of implementation by comparing the pre and post test scores on the OUNCE for grades kindergarten, three and five, and the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, grades three and five. The kindergarten students pre-implementation checklist of low self-esteem characteristics was compared to a post-implementation checklist of the same behaviors. The results of these assessments based on the outcome objectives were the following:

(1) At the end of 12 weeks, 48 percent of the third and fifth grade students demonstrated an increase of five to 10 points on the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (Appendix A: 40). While the author had desired for 50 percent of the targeted third and fifth graders to demonstrate a five to 10 point increase, these results were not disappointing as 63 percent of the students had increases of at least one point, and 11 percent of the students' scores remained the same. The Coopersmith test was administered orally and individually

to each student. It was felt by the author that the students had a clearer understanding of the test items during post testing as they asked fewer questions. The Coopersmith effectively evaluated how the students saw themselves.

(2) At the end of 12 weeks, 86 percent of the kindergarten, third and fifth grade students demonstrated an increase of one to five points on the OUNCE sub test for self-esteem (Appendix B: 42). One hundred percent of the target group demonstrated an increase in or a maintenance of their pre-test score. The author was pleased with the results attained.

The OUNCE Attitude Scale is regarded by counselors and psychologists as providing an accurate picture of the student being evaluated. However, because it was completed by the author and the other participating teachers about the target group, it is reasonable to ask if the observers were truly unbiased. In the future the author will ask another colleague, who has frequent contact with the target group, to also do the post evaluation in hopes of obtaining truly reliable results.

(3) At the end of 12 weeks, 75 percent of the kindergarten, third and fifth grade students demonstrated an increase of

one to five points on the OUNCE sub-test for self-confidence (Appendix B: 42). Eighty-one percent of the targeted students demonstrated an increase in or a maintanence of their pre-test score. The only students to demonstrate decreases in pre-test scores were the third grade students with 62 percent of them showing sizeable decreases.

When the third grade teacher and the author analyzed these results, the conclusion reached was that many of the statements for this sub-test deal with school work. The targeted third graders were not experiencing academic success and the sub-test measured that. All of the targeted third grade students were recommended for placement in a program for at-risk students for the 1991-92 school year.

(4) At the end of 12 weeks, 67 percent of the targeted kindergarten students reduced the number of observable characteristics of low self-esteem to less than three as measured by the teacher made checklist of observable characteristics of low self-esteem (Appendix D: 49). The author had desired for 100 percent of the targeted kindergarten students to reduce their observable characteristics to less than three and did not achieve this result. Reductions, sizeable ones, were made by all of the

targeted students, leading the author to believe the objective was unrealistic.

Upon completion of the project, the fifth grade students listed those things they felt were necessary for establishing healthy levels of self-esteem. These lists were evaluated as to quantity and quality by the writer. The results were compared to the pre-implementation list.

The initial list was compiled of guesses about what self-esteem constituted. The students learned by discovery and experimentation what self-esteem was and how one would go about increasing or developing it. The post-implementation list was extensive and the students applied convergent thinking skills to group the ideas together (Appendix E: 51).

The log documenting teacher and student activities was reviewed at meetings held throughout the implementation as well as upon completion of the project. Implications for further use of the project, as well as activities which should be eliminated were noted. The kindergarten and third grade teachers, the mentor and the writer met and discussed the merits as well as the problems of the project. Periodically, the students involved in the practicum discussed the things they liked or did not like about the project.

Specific information kept in the author's log has been recorded in the Methods chapter.

Meetings were held every two weeks throughout the implementation period. At these meetings the involved teachers discussed allowing the third grade students to teach the self-esteem lessons to their other, non-participating, classmates. It was decided that an end-of-the-year magic show would be held to allow for this to occur. The fifth grade students trained and assisted the third graders.

At all of the meetings held, the problem of the third grade target group's sporadic attendance was discussed, but never resolved. The author found herself in a difficult situation with a respected colleague whom she did not wish to offend, yet faced with an important project to complete. The author believes this situation impacted the practicum results greatly.

Overall, the project was well received by staff and students with both groups anxious to participate again. Gains in self-esteem were made by the involved students. Implications for continuation of the project are noted.

CHAPTER V

Recommendations

The writer shared the project results with colleagues at the targeted school. During the 1991-1992 school year, training will be offered by the writer to interested teachers. The kindergarten and third grade teachers have been encouraged to become trainers, also, and to use their students as peer facilitators. In addition, the writer shared project results at the monthly meeting of the teachers of at-risk students. Training was offered to these teachers as well.

Plans are currently being made to continue using this project. While the objectives will be revised by the author and kindergarten teacher to be more realistic, the practicum will be used as it is written for the 1991-1992 school year with kindergarten and fifth grade at-risk students.

The third grade teacher involved in the practicum project has expressed an interest in co-sponsoring an after school enrichment class offering training to any interested students. If funding for additional magic equipment, as well as student interest, can be generated, this will be pursued.

The author would recommend that any further use of this project include a revision of the outcome objectives. The establishment of one's self-esteem is a long and cumulative process. Change will be slow, and the author feels that the objectives need to reflect this.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

Results of the Coopersmith

Self-Esteem Inventory Administered to

Third and Fifth Grade Students

APPENDIX A

Results of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory Student Short Form Administered to Third and Fifth Grade Students

Student	Pre test	Post test	Student	Pre test	Post test
1	64	72	15	36	24
2	60	80	16	68	68
3	72	64	17	56	68
4	52	68	18	72	60
5	28	60	19	76	64
6	64	68	20	40	52
7	48	60	21	60	84
8	72	84	22	36	20
9	36	36	23	32	72
10	36	32	24	52	56
11	60	52	25	52	40
12	40	40	26	40	56
13	40	16	27	24	32
14	20	36			

APPENDIX B:

Results of the OUNCE Attitude Scale

Sub-test for Self-Esteem and Self-Confidence Administered to

Kindergarten, Third and Fifth Grade Students

APPENDIX B

Results of the OUNCE Attitude Scale Sub-test for Self-Esteem and Self-Confidence Administered to Kindergarten, Third and Fifth Grade Students

Student	Self-Esteem Score		Self-Confidence Score	
	Pre test	Post test	Pre test	Post test
1	11	19	8	17
2	18	20	13	20
3	14	20	7	18
4	18	20	12	20
5	9	13	13	18
6	20	20	17	20
7	17	20	16	18
8	14	18	16	19
9	16	17	14	20
10	9	19	18	18
11	16	18	15	17
12	14	19	16	20
13	7	15	13	17
14	13	20	14	19

APPENDIX B Continued

Results of the OUNCE Attitude Scale Sub-test for Self-Esteem and Self-Confidence Administered to Kindergarten, Third and Fifth Grade Students

Student	Self-Esteem Score		Self-Confidence Score	
	Pre test	Post test	Pre test	Post test
15	13	18	13	19
16	15	17	14	20
17	20	20	18	20
18	20	20	20	20
19	15	20	11	10
20	20	20	13	11
21	17	18	19	15
22	18	20	17	12
23	11	18	15	11
24	17	19	18	11
25	13	19	11	12
26	11	12	15	17
27	12	20	12	12
28	17	18	18	19
29	13	17	13	19

APPENDIX B Continued

Results of the OUNCE Attitude Scale Sub-test for Self-Esteem and Self-Confidence Administered to Kindergarten, Third and Fifth Grade Students

Student	Self-Esteem Score		Self-Confidence Score	
	Pre test	Post test	Pre test	Post test
30	9	18	13	18
31	18	20	17	20
32	14	20	15	19
33	15	20	16	20
34	11	18	9	20
35	20	20	20	20
36	16	19	18	19

Average Self-Esteem Score (Pre-implementation) = 14.8

Average Self-Esteem Score (Post-implementation) = 18.9

Average Self-Confidence Score = 15.8

Average Self-Confidence Score (Post-implementation) = 16.2

APPENDIX C

Kindergarten Checklist of Low Self-Esteem Characteristics

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Place a check beside those statements that describe the student.

SELF-CONCEPT

1. seldom laughs and smiles ☐
2. puts self down ☐
3. is a smart aleck ☐
4. gives excuses for not working with others ☐
5. highly critical of others ☐
6. blames others for things done wrong ☐

MOTIVATION AND INTEREST

1. is dependent ☐
2. never completes task ☐
3. daydreams ☐
4. refuses to do projects ☐
5. amuses self with things other than projects ☐

APPENDIX C, Continued

Page Two

Kindergarten Checklist of Low Self-Esteem Characteristics

MOTIVATION AND INTEREST

6. avoids participation ☐
7. exhibits behavior problems ☐
8. seldom takes pride in his work ☐
9. seldom appears happy ☐

ATTENTION SPAN

1. can attend to project for _____ min.
2. easily distracted and distracting to others ☐
3. cannot sit still ☐

Comments:

APPENDIX D

Results of Kindergarten Checklist of

Low Self-Esteem Characteristics

Student	Number of Demonstrated Low Self-Esteem Characteristics	
	Pre test	Post test
28	10	6
29	5	2
30	7	0
31	7	0
32	7	3
33	5	0
34	8	2
35	5	1
36	14	3
Total:	68	17

APPENDIX E

Post-Implementation List of Items Contributing to High Self-Esteem as Compiled by Fifth Grade Students

Academic success

Setting and reaching goals

Acceptance of self and others

Significant others

Being accepted by others

Receiving recognition

Support groups: family, peers

Being the best you can be

Developing a talent or skill

Helping others

Refusing to accept put downs of others

Talking through problems